

7 Stone Drive
Windsor Locks, CT 06096
February 20, 2009

Appropriations Committee
Room 2700, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: H. B. No. 6365 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2011, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR

Dear Committee Members:

My family was disheartened when we heard Governor Rell's recommendation to close Cedarcrest Hospital in Newington. Cedarcrest has been a safe haven for my brother for almost 6 years now.

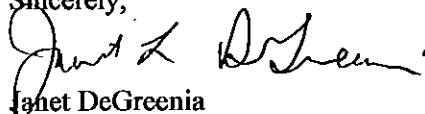
My brother is 40 years old and has complex psychiatric and physical health issues and is borderline mentally retarded. His case has been a puzzle to doctors over the years. He has many periods of ups and downs and can be difficult to stabilize at times. He is receiving true psychiatric treatment from Cedarcrest not substance abuse treatment. We have been very fortunate to have Cedarcrest to provide care for him as his cognitive skills and activities of daily living are not always up to par and do not make him a good candidate for a group home and there are never enough beds available in psychiatric units of CT nursing homes to get him placed. The social workers at Cedarcrest have been working hard to find the right situation to fit his needs. Unfortunately with the many cuts that have already happened in the area of mental health, there are not a lot of options available for him.

Over the years we have seen many changes at Cedarcrest, the majority for the better. A heightened security presence, new staff and new approaches to patient care are a large part of those changes. Just recently they started a program that encourages families to come spend time at the hospital and visit with their loved one and have lunch or play bingo. The patients are encouraged to cook and participate in the arrangements for the event. Recognizing that it is important for patients to have purpose and to spend time with their loved ones shows that the staff cares and I believe they do. The staff at Cedarcrest takes time to talk to me when I visit my brother and ask questions of him when we return from an outing and genuinely seem to care about his well being. They work closely with his conservator and our family to determine the best course of action for his care.

We do not want to see him moved from the safe and caring environment he is in now to one that is so far away from our home in Enfield. Travel to Middletown would take us almost an hour each way to visit him. We feel it is important to visit him often and moving him there would limit our ability to do so.

We ask that you reconsider closing Cedarcrest, the families of the patients from Northern CT need this facility to remain open. The staff at Cedarcrest has made strides to improve the facility and treatment of their patients and truly take pride in what they do. I would like to see them have a chance to make real change in the lives of the people they touch here.

Sincerely,



Janet DeGreenia